

*Joins AARP in Support of Reform*

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today Congressman Charlie Wilson joined AARP and the Center for Medicare Advocacy at a press conference in Washington, DC to discuss why health care reform is good for seniors.

Wilson has been a consistent supporter of health care reform that would provide quality affordable care for Americans and accountability for insurance companies. "I would support the Senate bill with changes that take out the special deals for certain states, like Nebraska, improve affordability for middle class families and adjust the harmful excise tax on high cost health plans," Wilson said. "I need to make sure that those modifications have been made. I'm waiting for the final language of the reconciliation bill to see the changes for myself before I can commit my vote."

At the press conference, Wilson explained why health care reform is so important to the country and his district, particularly to senior citizens and retirees. His remarks follow:

"My district, in Appalachian Ohio, has a large senior and retiree population, so I'm really interested in how this reform bill strengthens Medicare and helps our early retirees.

If we don't do anything, the Medicare Trust Fund is projected to be insolvent by 2016. Medicare takes care of our seniors, but it is high time that we take better care of the Medicare program and make sure it remains in the black.

This bill keeps Medicare solvent for 9 more years.

We extend that timeline by finally getting tough on the waste in Medicare. So, as we make services better for seniors, we also fight fraud and waste. Taxpayers should no longer be asked to foot the bill for excessive charges, false claims or other abusive tactics.

In addition, reforming health care will help early retirees by creating a temporary re-insurance program. This helps offset the costs of expensive health claims for employers who provide health benefits for retirees age 55-64.

Let's be clear: Insurance companies have failed to provide affordable insurance for many Americans, especially early retirees.

In my own district, I know lots of people who retired in their 50s or early 60s – some by choice, some because their company went out of business. Many lose access to their employer-sponsored health insurance and are forced into the private insurance market.

This has happened to people across my district, from the Delphi retirees to steel workers and many others.

As they get older and need healthcare even more, the only option for some is private insurance. And insurance companies are charging an arm and a leg for that.

We owe it to these retirees to give them a better option. Creating a temporary reinsurance program will reduce the risk associated with early retirement.

I have been interested throughout this entire process in health care reform that provides quality affordable care for all Americans. I think that the support of AARP and everything that you'll hear here today shows that older Americans will be better off because of our work on reform."

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